

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4389

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

CINCLANT

CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 1647

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR PDEV AO

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE ATTEMPT TO BRING ABOUT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT

1. HIGH COMMISSIONER ADMIRAL CARDOSO TOLD ME ON OCTOBER 24
THAT BOTH FNL AND UNITA HAVE AGREED TO COME TO A CONFERENCE
INVOLVING THE THREE ANGOLAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. MPLA IS STILL
BALKING, BUT CARDOSO HAS NOT LOST HOPE THAT SOME ARRANGEMENT
CAN BE WORKED OUT BEFORE NOVEMBER 11 THAT WILL ALLOW THE
PORTUGUESE TO TURN OVER SOVEREIGNTY, RATHER THAN HAVING TO
LEAVE THE NIGHT OF THE TENTH WITHOUT ANY TRANSFER OF POWERS.

2. CARDOSO TALKED WITH MPLA PRESIDENT AGISTINHO NETO ON
OCTOBER 22 AT NETO'S REQUEST, TO DISCUSS A NUMBER OF
CURRENT PROBLEMS. CARDOSO PRESSED NETO TO SIT DOWN WITH FNL
AND UNITA. HE TOLD NETO THAT ALTHOUGH IT WAS NONE OF
HIS BUSINESS, HE FELT AS MILITARY MAN
THAT THE MPLA COULD NOT HOLD OUT ON THE WIDELY SCATTERED
FRONTS ON WHICH IT WAS NOW ENGAGED. HE SAID THAT IF MPLA COULD
NEUTRALIZE UNITA THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS, IT WOULD BE IN MUCH
BETTER SHAPE. NETO SAID PORTUGAL HAS ITS OWN REVOLUTION
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AND THE ADMIRAL SHOULD KNOW HOW IT IS; IF YOU HAVE TO DIE FOR YOUR

REVOLUTION, YOU DIE FOR IT. BESIDES, HE ADDED, A CONFERENCE WITH FNLA AND UNITA WOULD BE MEANINGLESS AS BOTH ORGANIZATIONS HAVE PROVED THEMSELVES INSINCERE. THE ADMIRAL TOLD ME THAT INTERTERRITORIAL COORDINATION MINISTER, VICTOR GRESPO, WOULD MEET WITH NETO ON OCTOBER 25.

3. CARDOSO SAID THAT MPLA LEADERS HAVE BEEN IN CONSTANT MEETINGS FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS AS THEY ATTEMPT TO COPE WITH THEIR DETERIORATING MILITARY SITUATION. HE NORMALLY MEETS EVERY DAY AT NOON WITH THE MPLA MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO, LOPO DE NASCIMENTO, BUT HAS NOT SEEN HIM FOR A FEW DAYS AND GOVERNMENT BUSINESS IS BACKLOGGED.

4. THE ADMIRAL OFFERED SOME FRIENDLY ADVICE TO THE U.S. CO GOVERNMENT IN ANGOLA, HE SAID, COULD LAST FOR THREE DAYS WITHOUT THE MPLA. IT IS THE MPLA THAT HAS THE ALLEGIANCE OF THE PROFESSIONALS, THE CIVIL SERVANTS, THE LABOR MOVEMENT, AND OTHER KEY SECTORS OF SOCIETY. FNLA HAS NO POLITICAL BASE AND NO QUALIFIED POLITICAL LEADERS. UNITA HAS A LARGER BASE, BUT IT TOO, HAS LIMITED CAPABILITIES. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, CONTINUED THE ADMIRAL, SHOULD SEEK OUT MODERATE ELEMENTS IN THE MPLA AND ATTEMPT TO WORK WITH THEM. ANGOLA CAN SURVIVE WITHOUT FNLA OR UNITA, BUT MPLA IS KEY TO LONG TERM STABILITY AND SOME MINIMUM PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.

5. I TOLD THE ADMIRAL THAT IF MPLA TAKES OVER ALONE IN LUANDA ON NOVEMBER 11, THE U.S. WOULD PROBABLY BE OBLIGED TO WITHHOLD RECOGNITION. HE SAID THAT PORTUGAL WILL NOT EXTEND DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION TO AN MPLA GOVERNMENT. CONTINGENCY PLANS ARE FOR CARDOSO TO LEAVE BY SHIP THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 10. WHEN I ASKED WHY A SHIP, HE REPLIED THAT IF MATTERS ARE NOT RESOLVED BY NOVEMBER 10, THE SECURITY SITUATION WILL BE SO DELICATE THAT IT WOULD BE TOO RISKY TO GO OUT BY AIR. HE OFFERED THE OPINION THAT IF WE DID NOT CLOSE THE CONSULATE AND LEAVE BEFORE NOVEMBER 11, THE MPLA WOULD THROW US OUT.

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